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Dell Cancels Book by Ellsberg But Simon & Schuster Steps In

By HENRY RAYMONT

The Dell Publishing Company has canceled a \$150,000 contract with Dr. Daniel Ellsberg on the grounds that he had failed to provide a 20,000-word introduction to a book of his writings on the Vietnam war in time for its projected publication before the end of this month.

A similar book, tracing Dr. Ellsberg's transformation from hawk to dove, culminating with his admitting to having leaked the secret Pentagon study to the news media, will now be issued by Simon & Schuster in November.

Mrs. Helen Meyer, president of Dell, confirmed yesterday that the deal was terminated two weeks ago because Dr. Ellsberg, who is facing trial in California on charges of having disclosed Government secrets, was unable to complete the introduction. Mrs. Meyer said that part of the material had already been set in type.

"We had planned to bring out in one volume a collection of Dr. Ellsberg's previously published essays and public statements about Vietnam," she said. "We needed a new introduction that would bring his thinking right up to date, and this he couldn't fulfill."

"We were very excited about the book because we thought he had a very important message—that's why we had planned a crash program to get the book out in August because it was timely. In a way we can't blame Dr. Ellsberg because he had other things to worry about."

Asserting that Dell will lose \$8,000 to \$10,000 in editorial and printing expenses incurred in the project, Mrs. Meyer dismissed the loss with this thought:

"The important thing in publishing is to understand that writers are not machines and that book contracts involve taking risks. And when we can't get what we're buying we better forget the whole thing."

Indicating that the contract was voided by mutual agreement, Mrs. Meyer said that Dr. Ellsberg had already returned an unspecified sum of money that had been paid on the \$150,000 advance on royalties provided by the agreement.

Last month, Dell and the former Defense Department analyst announced that the \$150,000 would be given to the American Friends Service Committee for "their work with war wounded children in Indochina."